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General and complete disarmament

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General**

Addendum

Contents

		Page
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Barbados	2
	El Salvador	2
	Senegal	2

* A/58/150.
** The information contained herein was received after submission of the main report.

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II. Replies received from Governments

Barbados

[Original: English]
[8 July 2003]

The Barbados Defence Force has not participated in any disarmament or arms control matters. As a result, the Force has not had to observe environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of any agreements or taken other action relative to the objectives envisaged in the resolution.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[3 July 2003]

On the basis of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Framework Treaty for Democratic Security in Central America, El Salvador, when it has destroyed weapons seized because of illicit ownership, has applied national environmental norms. Furthermore, even though El Salvador has never had a surplus of conventional weapons and has never had weapons of mass destruction or chemical or biological weapons, it would apply environmental norms in accordance with agreements on disarmament and arms control.

Senegal

Note:

The reply received from the Government of Senegal covers information on General Assembly resolutions 57/63 on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and arms control, 57/53 on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security and 57/64 on the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control.

[Original: French]
[9 June 2003]

Senegal supports multilateral cooperation for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security just as it supports the principles governing disarmament and arms limitation. The State of Senegal considers that transparency in the field of weapons is a good non-proliferation basis for international regimes since providing information in the military field increases trust, predictability, moderation and, thereby, stability.

Transparency indeed can serve as a basis for the limitation and verifiable reduction of weapons at the subregional, regional and global levels. In this connection, Senegal affirms its support for disarmament.

Measures to ensure teleprocessing security are necessary in the exchange of information, particularly information linked to the circulation of weapons. This information must be kept confidential.

Accordingly, such information must be kept secure through a number of measures ensuring namely:

- the security of materials, software and computer processing by setting up appropriate technical systems;
- the security of information-exchange procedures through precise and specific regulation.

The specific area of the environment is affected by environmental degradation and damage resulting from the use of nuclear, bacteriological, chemical, radiological weapons and anti-personnel mines.

The Senegalese State affirms its constant desire to safeguard and maintain the environment in order to promote peace and sustainable development.

In this regard, Senegal supports the project to set up a United Nations fund for demining, which would be financed through a tax on the manufacture and production of weapons and weapons systems.

Furthermore, respect for the norms regulating the implementation of disarmament agreements is in keeping with respect for the rules that several States have voluntarily accepted. World disarmament cannot be achieved without regional disarmament. It is therefore necessary to conduct these two processes in tandem in the interest of regional and international peace and security. This is the basis for the ratification by the Senegalese State of all the disarmament agreements, of which the moratorium on small arms and light weapons stands out in particular. Its evaluation, within the framework of the implementation of disarmament agreements, has shown a number of shortcomings.

The moratorium provides for the establishment of national committees, and measures to ensure their effective operation and provide them with adequate human, material and financial resources. Consciousness-raising in the form of public conferences has been conducted with the collaboration of two associations:

- The Movement against Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa (MALAO),
- Discussion Groups of Senegal (CERES).

Training has been provided through workshops conducted by senior officers from the Army and National Gendarmerie, officials from National Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of civil society, academics and members of the Association of Weapons Manufacturers.

The national committee also provided technical assistance to MALAO in organizing in Dakar, under the auspices of non-governmental organizations, "International Alert", a meeting of members of civil society focusing on the topic of small arms and light weapons.

The transparency of licit trade in weapons requires that at least two registers should be kept: one for State weapons and another for weapons belonging to individuals on the basis of a prior authorization by the State. In addition to these objectives, the committee has the task of obtaining an exemption for the import of

weapons for the State and dealing with requests to import weapons submitted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The circulation of the information provided for under the moratorium can give clear indications of the weapons possessed by ECOWAS countries. But the real value of the exchange of information among the countries signatories to the moratorium depends on the desire to ensure transparency and the sincerity which should guide all the actors. Clearly, this is not the case with regard to all of Senegal's neighbours, who acquire weapons mainly from the former eastern European bloc. It is known that none of their transactions has been the subject of any declaration. Accordingly, there is a lack of uniformity in geographic regions with regard to compliance with the regulations.

The moratorium is particularly restrictive for Senegal, which has only one source for obtaining weapons, the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. Senegal's suppliers always respect international rules with regard to weapons and ammunition.

It appears that it is necessary to overcome the delay in the implementation of the moratorium's provisions and to supplement the related measures taking into account the following proposals:

1. At the national level, the committee should evaluate annual needs in terms of weapons and ammunition on the basis of a joint request by the security forces and at the same time formulate a renewable exemption valid for one year. The justification for this step can easily be seen in the situation experienced by the armies in Casamance.

In addition, a monitoring office, one of the moratorium's provisions, could be opened in the subregion. The great imbalance with regard to the supply of weapons and ammunition would then be reduced by the office, and visit certificates could possibly be issued by ECOWAS agents.

2. At the subregional (ECOWAS) level, the importance of monitoring the movement of all weapons and ammunition around Senegal is a sufficient reason for ECOWAS to draw up a moratorium on small arms and light weapons among the countries which are not members of ECOWAS and are neighbours of Senegal and the subregional institution. This act would eliminate some obvious problems resulting from the rebel movements in the subregion.

Its respect for the environment obliges Senegal to demine some areas of the national territory. In this regard, the establishment of a United Nations fund to be financed by a tax on the manufacture and production of weapons and weapon systems might be considered.

With regard to strengthening the capacity of States to identify means to ensure in a reliable manner the traceability of weapons, a support and assistance programme for teleprocessing could be considered. In view of this possibility, preliminary training of personnel could be undertaken prior to the effective installation of the computer equipment.

It would be a question therefore of eliminating the delay in implementing all the moratorium's provisions, undertaking internal and external improvements making it possible to take into account the specific situation of our country with regard to the rebellion in Casamance and, lastly, setting up a United Nations demining fund and providing it with adequate resources from a tax on weapons and weapons systems.